

DOLLAR'S LOST THROUGH FOOD WASTE

PURPOSE: This operational guide is provided to assist Air Force club managers and staff in reducing food waste in the food operation.

SCOPE: This guide applies to Air Force club management and employees.

GENERAL: Reducing food waste in your operation will cut cost. Uncover the hidden waste in your kitchen through a waste-awareness program that stresses strategies such as employee education and portion control.

GUIDANCE: Here are some suggestions on how to motivate your staff to reduce waste:

1. Keep an empty cooking pan on the line and one in the prep kitchen. Ask your employees to put every single bit of waste in the pan, every overcooked hamburger, every burnt chicken breast, every bit of pasta that falls on the floor. At the end of the feeding period, the chef and staff can see what was wasted. This visual aid is a strong tool.
2. Ensure you have a “waste log” and it is being used. Ask servers and managers to record when and why customers send food back to the kitchen. Management can review the sheets to see if there are any recurring problems.
3. Portion everything to avoid serving out more food than needed. During slower periods, have your line cooks portion ingredients. This practice not only uses their time effectively, it also gets them into the habit of portion control.
4. To maintain an effective waste-awareness program, the following tools are required:
 - a. *Labels:* Every prep item requires a label indicating the date and time of expiration. This helps ensure you use items before they expire.
 - b. *Ounce Scales:* Good-quality scales can be expensive, but they pay for themselves in about a month if used properly.
 - c. *Rubber spatulas:* Train employees to develop the habit of using a spatula to scrape the contents of cans, jars, and from each and every insert on the line.
 - d. *Ladles:* Every sauce on the line should have a ladle sized for its most frequent use.
5. Keep dairy products as far back in the walk-in refrigerator as possible. This will help increase shelf life since the temperature tends to be warmer nearer the door.
6. Don't judge products by price alone. Lower price can mean lower yield and lower quality, which leads to more waste.

7. Don't go overboard on trying to cut food waste. For example, only vegetables that are good enough to serve on a plate should be used for soup stock.

SUMMARY: It is everyone's responsibility to cut food waste. Management must establish written guidelines for employees to follow to ensure standardization in policy. Employee education and portion control increases awareness and limits potential waste within food programs. Ensure employees have the proper equipment to prevent waste. For more information, check out Operation Guides FDO-001, FDO-002, and FDO-003.